The Nikos Kazantzakis Chair

CENTER FOR MODERN GREEK STUDIES
THE NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS CHAIR
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

Μαντατοφόρος
ΕΔΡΑ ΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΑΖΑΝΤΖΑΚΗ

MODERN GREEK STUDIES FOUNDATION

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Visiting Scholar to the Kazantzakis Chair

The Center for Modern Greek Studies, the Kazantzakis Chair, at San Francisco State University, was honored to host **Professor Peter Bien**, Dartmouth College, a world-renown distinguished scholar and translator of Modern Greek poetry and a specialist on the oeuvre of Nikos Kazantzakis, who presented two lectures to the Kazantzakis Chair, Monday and Tuesday, March 8th and 9th, 1999.

Professor Bien is Professor of English and the Frederick Sessions Beebe '35 Professor in the Art of Writing Emeritus at Dartmouth. His major translations include Kazantzakis's *Report to Greco* and *The Last Temptation of Christ* as well as Stratis Myrivilis's *Life in the Tomb*. Among his many scholarly studies are *Kazantzakis and the Linguistic Revolution in Greek Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1972), *Nikos Kazantzakis* (Columbia University Press, 1972), *Three Generations of Greek Writers: Introductions to Cavafy, Kazantzakis, Ritsos* (Efstathiadis, 1983), *Nikos Kazantzakis: Novelist* (Duckworth, 1989), and *Kazantzakis: Politics of the Spirit* (Princeton University Press, 1991), and he has also co-edited with Darren Middleton, *God's Struggler: Religion in the Writings of Nikos Kazantzakis* (Mercer University Press, 1997). In addition to his many distinctions, Professor Bien was a founding member of the Modern Greek Studies Association and is currently the senior editor of the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, published by Johns Hopkins Press, one of the most respected journals in the field of Modern Greek Studies in the U.S.

Professor Bien is the third person of letters to visit and lecture at San Francisco State under the auspices of the Kazantzakis Chair. Professor Kimon Friar and Greek American writer Harry Mark Petrakis have visited in this capacity in the past.

Professor Peter Bien Lectures March 8 and 9, 1999

Professor Bien's first presentation was on **"Kazantzakis's Travel Writing"** in which he surveyed Kazantzakis's travelogues, including *Japan and China*, and offered an assessment of the author's contribution to this important genre. This talk took place on Monday, March 8 at 4 p.m. in the Humanities Building, Room 383, SFSU.

In his second lecture, **"Kazantzakis's Religious Vision,"** Professor Bien placed the author's religiosity in the context of "process theology" to show that Kazantzakis was perhaps too "modern" in his thinking for his Orthodox critics. This lecture took place on Tuesday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Humanities Building, Room 471, SFSU. A reception followed.

The lectures were indeed an enriching experience with one of the foremost authorities on this author. For information on future lectures, please call the Center of Modern Greek Studies at (415) 338-1892.

Testimonial Dinner for Professor Emeritus Thanasis Maskaleris

A testimonial dinner for **Thanasis Maskaleris**, Emeritus Professor of Comparative Literature and Creative Writing, SFSU, and the Founding Director of the Center for Modern Greek Studies (1981-1996), took place on Sunday, March 14, 1999 at the Ascension Cathedral Community Center, 4700 Lincoln in Oakland. Professor Maskaleris was honored for his distinguished service towards the development of the Center and for his contribution to Hellenism. He was given the Greek Government's "Order of the Phoenix" by the General Consul of Greece, **Dr. Taxiarchis-Aghis Christopoulos**. A scholarship fund in Professor Maskaleris' name has successfully raised over half the goal. Contributions are still being received. You may contribute by sending your amount to the Foundation. The event was sponsored by the Modern Greek Studies Foundation and the Republic of Greece. More information about this event will appear in the next issue of ***Mantatophoros.***

Recent Pledges to the MGSF

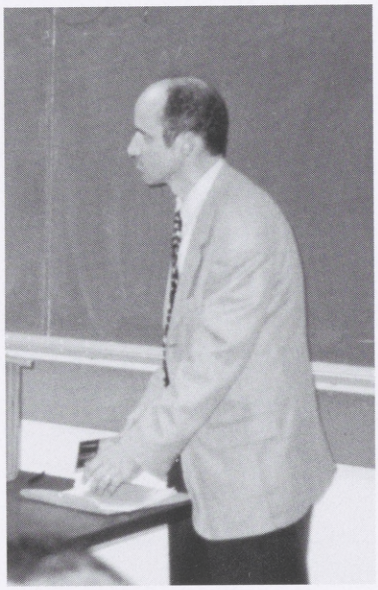
The Modern Greek Studies Foundation is working towards the establishment of a **Greek American Archive** at San Francisco State University wherein oral histories, books, periodicals, documents, photographs and other memorabilia on Greek immigrants and Greek Americans of the Bay Area will be collected and stored at the **Center for Modern Greek Studies** and at the **SFSU Leonard Library**. On February 6, 1999, the **Navarino Messinian Society** held their Annual Apocreatiki Macaronda Dinner Dance. The proceeds of the event will go towards underwriting a portion of the costs needed to fund this project. The Center is deeply grateful to the Navarino Messinian Society and thanks the President, **Tom Kastoras**, the officers of the Navarino Messinian Society, Board member **George Konstantopoulos,** and all of the society's members for their generosity and support of this important project. More information on the Greek American Archive will be provided in the next issue of ***Mantatophoros***.

News About Our Students

Fani Garagouni, a first-year MA student in the Department of Comparative Literature at SFSU, is the recipient of a three year scholarship from the Greek Government (IKY). Ms. Garagouni chose our program to pursue her interests in Modern Greek literature, and we are delighted to have her as our student.

Hellenic Diaspora Lecture Series Launched

On Friday, October 2, 1998 **Professor Gregory Jusdanis,** Ohio State University, a specialist on Modern Greek literature and past recipient of a Guggenheim award, launched the first of a series of lectures on the subject of the Hellenic diaspora by invited scholars to the Center for Modern Greek Studies.



Professor Gregory Jusdanis

Professor Jusdanis's talk addressed key issues concerning Greek Americans, the Hellenic diaspora and globalization. What can the meaning of Hellenism be today for the descendants of the early Greek immigrants to the U.S., removed by distance as well as time from Greece? Are Greek Americans in the third and fourth generation connected in any meaningful way to Greece or Hellenism? What bonds do they share with other Greek communities in Canada, Australia, Germany or elsewhere? What can it possibly mean to call oneself a Greek in today's multicultural and assimilating America? Professor Gregory Jusdanis considered these questions in his attempt to examine the significance of Hellenism for people living in the Hellenic diaspora. He argued that a global Hellenism has come into existence today, one different from the configuration of identity in Greece. This transnational Hellenism, however, rather than being an exception in the Greek experience, shares the values, images and dreams of previous conceptions of Hellenism in Byzantium and in antiquity. The lecture elicited a lively exchange with the audience on the importance of Greek "paideia" and the future role centers for Modern Greek Studies will play in the preservation and dissemination of knowledge about Greece.

Professor Jusdanis is the author of two books, *The Poetics of Cavafy: Textuality, Eroticism and History* (Princeton University Press, 1987) and *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature* (University of Minnesota Press, 1991), as well as a number of articles on the subject of the diaspora and multiculturalism.

Lectures by Specialists in Modern Greek Literature

Professor M. Byron Raizis, University of Athens
"Dionysios Solomos and Modern Greek Poetry"
Friday, Feb. 19, 1999, 7: 30 pm, HUM 579, SFSU Campus

Professor Peter Bien, Dartmouth University
"Kazantzakis' Travel Writing"
Monday, Mar. 8, 4:10 pm, HUM 383, SFSU Campus

"Kazantzakis's Religious Vision"
Tuesday, Mar. 9, 1999, 7:30 pm, HUM 471, SFSU Campus

Giorgos Syrimis, Dept. of Comp. Lit., Harvard
"The Poetics of Cavafy,"
Friday, Mar. 19, 1999, 7:30 pm, HUM 579, SFSU Campus

Maria Mavroudi, Ph.D., Dept. of Classics., Harvard
"The Contemporary Image of Byzantium: The Cultural Implementation of a Political Choice,"
Tuesday, Apr. 20, 1999, 7:00 pm, HUM 277, SFSU Campus

Center for Modern Greek Studies Courses - Spring 1999

MGS/GRE 151 Modern Greek II
Instructor: Professor Martha Klironomos

A continuation of Modern Greek I. Accelerated emphasis on conversation, reading, and writing in contemporary Greek. This is a GE course.

MGS 152 Modern Greek Conversation
Instructor: Ekaterina Chiotis

A new course for the advanced beginner, offered through the College of Extended Learning, and geared toward practical language usage.

HIST 349 Greece and the Balkans
Instructor: Steven Mavromihalis

An introductory course on the history of Modern Greece and the Balkans from the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence to the present.

WCL 425 Kazantzakis
Instructor: Professor Martha Klironomos

This course will focus on the major works of Nikos Kazantzakis. Texts to be studied include: *Report to Greco, Zorba the Greek, Last Temptation of Christ,* and *Journeying*.

Registration Information

SFSU students should register through touch-tone registration.

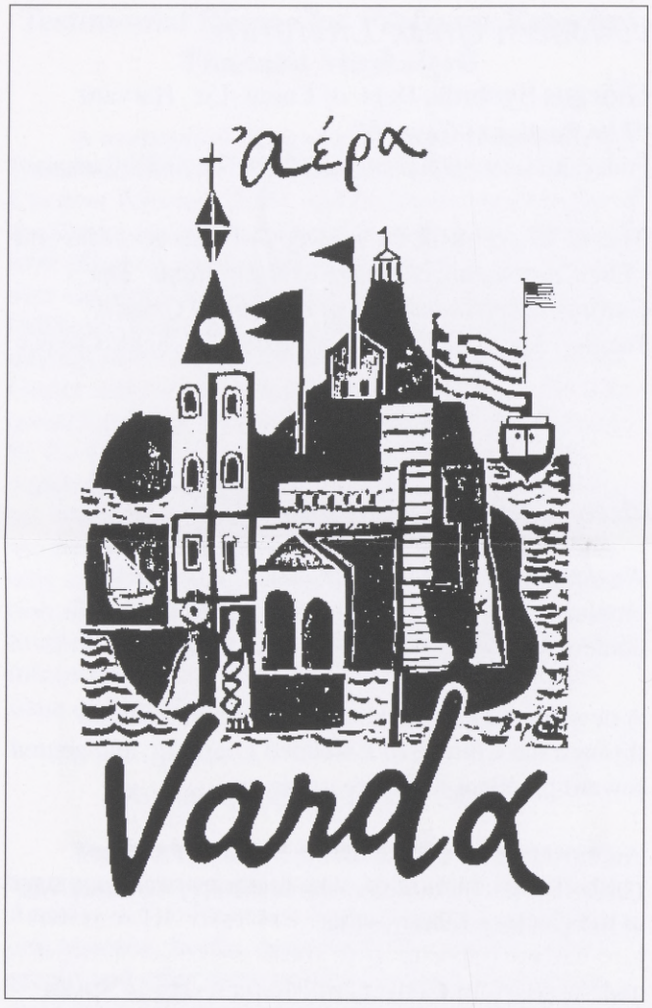
College of Extended Learning
Any adult in the community may enroll in University courses without being formally admitted to the University. To find out details of enrollment, please contact SFSU College of Extended Learning at (415) 405-7700.

Eldercollege
This program is also for those over 60. Although it is not possible to earn a degree through Eldercollege, you may audit regular classes on a space available basis. You do not need to meet the standard requirements for admission to be a part of this program. The fee is $45 per semester. Please note that this fee does not apply for courses offered through the College of Extended Learning. For more information, call the Urban Elders Program at (415) 338-2127.

Over-Sixty Program
Persons 60 years of age or older can earn a Baccalaureate or Master's degree at the University without payment of admission or registration fees. You only pay a $3 fee for each term you attend. To be eligible for the program, you must:

1) be at least 60 years of age
2) have been a California resident for a full year immediately preceding your enrollment
3) meet the standard requirements for admission to the University.

For more information call the Urban Elders Program at (415) 338-2127. Please note that this special fee does not apply for courses offered through the College of Extended Learning



The MGSF's Third Exhibition and Sale of Art by Northern California Artists of Hellenic Ancestry, September 18 and 19, 1998

The **Modern Greek Studies Foundation's** third exhibition and sale of artworks by Northern California Artists of Hellenic Ancestry, a fundraising event in support of the **Center for Modern Greek Studies**, was a great success with over a hundred and fifty guests attending the opening night reception. On exhibit was a selection of paintings, sculptures and photographs by participating artists, many of whom had exhibited in the previous two MGSF art exhibitions in 1995 and in 1996. This event was held at the **Seven Hills Conference Center** at **San Francisco State University** on Friday evening, September 18th, and all day Saturday, September 19th, 1998. The well-known Bay Area artist, the late **Jean Varda**, was our special featured artist, honored for his contributions to the local art scene. A special exhibit of his works was showcased at the event.

From left to right: Alexis Laris, Frank Boone, Harriet Boone, and Titika Koplos

The Friday night program was opened by **Alexis Laris**, Chair Person of the event, with **Dr. Peter Haikalis**, President of the MGSF, as Master of Ceremonies. **Mrs. Virginia Goldstein**, Varda's former wife, and **Vagadu Varda**, the artist's daughter, shared personal reminiscences of the artist. Remarks on Varda were also made by **Thanasis Maskaleris**, Emeritus Professor. **Dr. Taxiarchis-Aghis Christopoulos**, the Consul General of Greece, San Francisco, extended his greetings. The program ended with the presentation of a check to **Professor Martha Klironomos**, Director of the **Center for Modern Greek Studies,** for $5,000 by two officers of the **Oakland Chapter of the Order of AHEPA**, **Anastasios Samouris**, Chapter President, and **Harry Metaxas**, Chapter Treasurer. This donation was granted in support of the Kazantzakis Chair Endowment Fund.

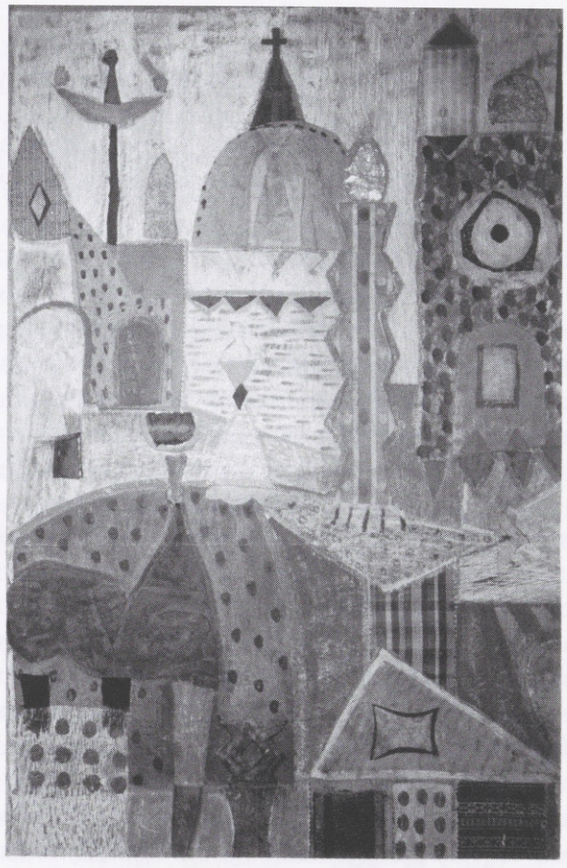
Virginia Goldstein
(photograph of Jean Varda on the left)

From left to right: Dr. Peter Haikalis, President MGSF, and Dr. Taxiarchis-Aghis Christopoulos, General Consul

The **Center for Modern Greek Studies, Nikos Kazantzakis Chair,** wishes to thank all persons involved with this extraordinary evening: first, the volunteers and staff members who helped organize this event, **Alexis Laris**, **Michael Genung**, **Patricia Aleck, Connie Aretos, Cathie Banks, Frank Boone, Harriet Boone, Ann Condas, Robert Critcher, Effie Davlantes, Linda Gibbons, Dr. Peter Haikalis and Susan Haikalis, Professor Martha Klironomos, Titika Koplos, Virginia Lagiss, Cleo Lekas, Irene Margelos, Professor Thanasis Maskaleris, John Monolakis, Helen Noakes, John Siambis, Mary Thodos,** and **Athena Vutiritsas.** The Center is also indebted to the **Oakland AHEPA Chapter** for its generous support of the Kazantzakis Chair and of Modern Greek Studies at San Francisco State.

In an interview on the local cable television program "Greek TV" with **Dimitris Carapanos** in September 1998, **Professor Klironomos** thanked all of the contributing artists of this exhibition as well as the MGSF, the number of volunteers, supporters and benefactors of the event, including Marcus and Millichap and Lolonis Wines. She stressed that the success of events such as these could not be realized without the support of the Bay Area Hellenic and

From left to right: Christina Duvaras, Maria Klironomos, Professor Martha Klironomos, and Dr. Ana Maria Horta



Painting by Varda

philhellenic community. The interview was conducted at the Center's Library where **Professor Klironomos** also had the opportunity to speak on the germination and scope of the **Center for Modern Greek Studies** and its plans for the immediate future.

Recent Donations to the Center for Modern Greek Studies

In January, 1999 the Greek Ministry of Culture and Science gave a generous donation of $7,000 to the Center for Modern Greek Studies, Nikos Kazantzakis Chair, at San Francisco State University. The Greek Ambassador to the U.S., Mr. Alexander Philon, commented on behalf of the Ministry and said that the donation was granted in recognition of the efforts of the Center Director, Professor Martha Klironomos, in promoting the Greek language, its culture and traditions. The Center wishes to thank Mr. Evangelos Venizelos, the Greek Minister of Culture and Science, Ambassador Philon, and Dr. Taxiarchis-Aghis Christopoulos, General Consul of Greece, San Francisco, for their support of the Center and its cultural activities.

Odysseus Elytis. **The Oxopetra Elegies**. Trans. David Connolly. Harwood Amsterdam: Academic Publishers. 1996.

Odysseus Elytis. **Odysseus Elytis**. Jeffrey Carson and Nikos Sarris, trans. Introduction and Notes by Jeffrey Carson. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1997.

The translators of these two editions of Elytis's poetry grapple not only with familiar issues involving the theory and practice of translation but also with the inherent complexities prescribed by the demands of translating this type of Greek modernist poetry into English. Their collective task is not unlike that which was contemplated by Ezra Pound in advising Mary Barnard on the issue of translating from ancient Greek into English: "[C]an we in eng[lish] / observe the [Greek] measurements . . . Can it be done without paralyzing the speech altogether"? Similarly, contemporary translators vie with the technical difficulties of generating Greek into comparable English because of the former's polyvalency in its inflectional patterns, its grammatical gender markings, its syntactic variants, let alone its multiple lexical significations, all of which impede an easy passage into English. Connolly relates Elytis's own skeptical view that only a fraction of the poetry can be adequately translated; the poet "plays in so many keys of the Greek language—the ancient, the medieval, the modern, the learned, the popular, the private" and such a scale is simply "not available to the translator in English." The translator also faces the impossibility of relaying the stringent metrical patterns, rhyme schemes, and cadences that typify Elytis's poetic signature in his conscious deployment of the tenets of the Greek modernist project, which aims, among other things, at textual recall by reproducing and/or breaking away from Greek literary traditions ranging from the ancient and ecclesiastical to the demotic.

Despite such obstacles, the translators of the two separate volumes under review have produced fine translations in their own right by espousing a "literal" approach that, they maintain, befits the specific case of Elytis. Yet each of their translations produce quite different results. In Connolly's case, a literal translation counteracts a common practice among colleagues, who advocate a "re-creation . . . of a new and independent poem" and usually condemn "a close adherance to the words of the original. . . . " Underlying this "re-recreation" method, Connolly explains, is the idea that "both the poet and the translator are 'translators' of the poet's original vision in the sense that the poet too is faced with the problem of finding a suitable form of expression in the source language in which to embody his vision." But Elytis himself, Connolly argues, rejects such a premise. The essence of Elytis's poetry is implied in the very autonomy and arrangement of the words he employs "in which the words themselves as sounds and images precede, or are at least as important as, their own cognitive content."

A literal translation entails for Connolly "as close a correspondence as possible in the target language to the original word or phrasal unit"; however, he abandons this technique when the "result [is] clearly unnatural in terms of utterance in the target language or unsatisfactory in terms of poetic effect." Yet he warns against a common tendency of the translator "to normalize the language of the original, to bring it more in keeping with normal usage in the target language and in so doing simplify the original." Such an undertaking leads one into the "trap of clarifying or explaining" through the act of translation. An overriding concern was to preserve the singularity of Elytis's enigmatic and elliptical expression.

Connolly's translation of *The Oxopetra Elegies* is an eloquent reproduction of the Elytian elegaic form--fourteen pensive meditations on love, death, and the afterlife that invite comparison with the elegy's originary function. He conveys the richness of the Greek but also reveals comparable resonance in the English language, as reflected, for example, in the elegy "La Pallida Morte ": "Odourless yet like blossom / Death is grasped through the / Nostrils. Square silent buildings with / Endless corridors come between but the odour / Persistently passes folds in white sheets or crimson." Despite the compromises owing to "the much more analytical nature of the English language in comparison with Greek," his technique emulates the syntactic elasticity of Greek by virtue of the poetic form, while it unearths English's own idiomatic fecundity.

Connolly's diction, like Elytis's, is thoughtful, seeking the rare word or inventing one that does not exist, as demonstrated in the poems "Harmless, Hopeful, Unhindered Day" (the archaic "to filch" for

"na upoklevyw" and newly coined "gleams of July" for "ioulivzei") and in "The Obscure Verb" (the made-up word "decrasticate" for the non-existent "katarkuqmeuvw"). Acknowledging the platitude that translation "is to some extent an interpretation," Connolly believes that "it should not preclude other possible interpretations." He prefers whatever allows the reader "access to the multiple levels of meaning," as indicated in his translation of "the Far Cape" for "Oxopetra" : a geographical place, a promontory, and, by association, an extreme point in time and in the poet's life.

Carson and Sarris note that they, too, are "literal" in their method, "though where the situation required [they] sought equivalences." They justify their approach by contending that Elytis's "subtle play of mind in language and his melodic exaltation make him much more difficult to translate, cadence by cadence, than his two great predecessors, Cavafy and Seferis; but all his translators have found that, because of the poetry's emotional ordering and clustering of images, it usually comes over best when translated literally." In contrast to Connolly, however, Carson and Sarris aim at a more explanatory method in their translation and, in adhering to the syntactical phrasing of the Greek, make Elytis's original more accessible to both the Greek-speaking student and the non-Greek reader, as seen (again) in "La Pallida Morte": "Scentless is death yet / The nostrils catch it like / A flower. Silent square buildings with boundless / Corridors interfere but the scent / Insistently penetrates creases of white sheets or cherry red."

Yet their innovativeness is best discerned in their handling of Elytis's metrics and rhyme-schemes. "We abandoned efforts," they maintain, "to reproduce elaborate meters in such poems as 'The Monogram' and 'Mystic Versicles,' which would have been as distorting in Elytis as in Pindar. The odes of *The Axion Esti*, however, depend so much on metrical contrast with the rest of the work, that we felt obliged to find appropriate closed measures." Accomplishing a technical feat, Carson and Sarris laboriously approximate Elytis's original in "Ode 1 " from "The Passion," using a free-style translation to illustrate how form "is a part of the poet's signature, and honest translators deviate reluctantly" : "My mouth was still in clay and then he named you / Rosy newborn babe with specks of dew / And from that time he molded the line of your lips / And the smoke of your hair deep yet in dawn / He gave you articulation and the lambda and epsilon."

The *Collected Poems* is the first complete collection of Elytis's poetry published in any language. Carson's lengthy introduction, which provides an overview of Elytis's major books of poetry, as well as the copious footnotes to the poems themselves, are helpful and provide explanations of literary, historical and cultural references that may not be apparent to the non-Greek reader. But while Carson certainly offers insight into Elytis's thematics and predilection for "myth-making," he does not address Elytis's formalist poetics or ideological positions, a treatment of which surely would be of value to those reading this volume. Literary scholars might also take issue with some of Carson's attempts to situate Elytis within the sensibilities of other writers--a difficult undertaking. He links Elytis to Eliot but not to Yeats, for example, contradicting what other critics have found to be a shared affinity in both Elytis's and Yeats's brand of cultural nationalism.

Translations of Modern Greek literature are in dire need since they are such a practical way to stimulate interest in the field, especially among non-Greek readers. The two volumes by Connolly and by Carson and Sarris, indicate the high quality of current work at and how the Greek language elicits polyphony in its transliterative responses. More can be done, but not solely in terms of quantitative output. It would be fruitful if translators entered into a dialogue with literary scholars (not excluding those who do both) since the field of translation deals with similar issues that have caused heated debate in literary circles in recent decades--for example, the contingencies of value that enter the selection process of why and how a given writer gets translated.

Interpreters of Elytis's poetry, for example, accentuate the semiotic potentialities of his poetic language. His loaded words--"cosmos," "ethnos," "topos"--often call up their very genealogy by way of their changing significations over the course of several millenia and through an array of literary texts. The reasons underlying the choices made in such instances by the translators of the two volumes would insure lively exchange.

Martha Klironomos
San Francisco State University

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AHEPA Family Event to Benefit Modern Greek Studies Foundation

The Oakland AHEPA Family presents their first Annual "International Spring Gala, La Festa Italiana," on Saturday, April 24, 1999, at the Ascension Cathedral Community Center, 4700 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland, CA. Last year, a $5,000 donation was made by the Oakland Chapter of the Order of AHEPA to the Modern Greek Studies Foundation to continue the financial growth of the Kazantzakis Chair Endowment Fund. At that time, a commitment was made to make a similar contribution this year. All the proceeds from this event will be donated to fulfill this commitment.

A five course gourmet Italian dinner is planned including wine, live music and entertainment. Cocktails, 6 -7 p.m. Dinner, 7:30 p.m. Dancing, 8 p.m. - 1 a.m. (Dancing only tickets, $10 after 10 p.m.) So come—enjoy the atmosphere, the food, the wine, the dancing and the camaraderie. For reservations, please send your check for $35 per person (payable to the "Order of AHEPA") to: Titika Koplos, 6250 Merced Avenue, Oakland, CA, 94611, or call (510) 339-2947. The deadline is April 19, 1999. For more information, please call Harry or Louise Metaxas (510) 632-9112.

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